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Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

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Dear Legislators,

Thank you all for attending this hearing on the Tanning Parlor Bill. My name is Dr. Kay Watnick and I am a practicing dermatologist in West Bloomfield and on staff at William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak. During my 23 year career in Dermatology, my colleagues and I have seen an alarming increase in all kinds of skin cancer. Melanoma, the deadliest form, has increased almost 700% in the past fifty years. At current rates, 1 in 5 Americans will develop some form of skin cancer, and 1 in 33 will develop melanoma. One American dies every 65 minutes of a melanoma. Five or more sunburns double one's risk of developing skin cancer. Over the past twenty years, the incidence of pediatric melanoma has increased 100%. Melanoma is now the second most common cancer for a female age 20-29. These last two facts are as alarming as any. We know that ultraviolet radiation is more damaging to younger skin. UV radiation is the single biggest cause of skin cancer. Tanning beds emit UV radiation that is far more potent, up to 15 times stronger, than natural sun rays. A prospective study of over 100,000 Scandinavian women showed a significant increase in the development of melanoma among regular sunbed users, and this was highest in women younger than 36 years old.

Seventy percent of tanning bed users in the U.S. are caucasian females age 16-49. A recent study in Minneapolis showed that 51% of teenage girls had used a tanning booth. The very group that frequents tanning parlors most is the group that is developing life-threatening melanoma at an alarming rate.

I have a patient, who at age 13, rode her bike to a tanning salon in Bloomfield Township, was placed in a tanning bed, no questions asked and no forms read or signed. By the next morning she had a blistering sunburn. I have two patients who are sophomores right here at MSU who had melanomas as teens. I have seen a young mother with an infant child die from a melanoma I diagnosed when she was pregnant. I have a 42 year old patient, a mother of four, who has had two melanomas, one invasive, who spent her early years using a tanning booth.

Twenty-eight states currently have tanning parlor regulations and several others are in the process of passing them, including Ohio. In our state there is no age restriction on the

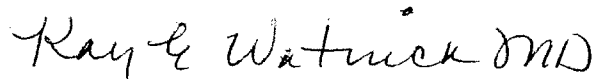
use of tanning beds, despite the fact that we know that UV radiation is most damaging prior to age 20. As dermatologists who see skin cancer in younger and younger patients, it is our responsibility to inform the public of these risks, and most importantly to protect minors by requiring parental consent.

House Bill 4146 is responsible and reasonable legislation. It is less strict than the bill recently passed in Wisconsin, which prevents anyone under the age of 16 from using a tanning bed. Our bill requires parental consent for minors ages 14-17. It requires that tanning parlors be licensed. It requires that warning signs be posted and consent forms signed, both of which list the risks of UV radiation and the medications and diseases that increase the risk of burning.

I have lived my entire life in the state of Michigan. I care deeply about the welfare of this state. I look forward to the economic turnaround that is on the horizon. This bill is not meant to cause financial hardship to tanning salons. Minors will still be able to get a harmless spray-on tan without parental consent.

This bill will help in our effort to reverse a trend in skin cancer, and to save lives. I hope you will support its passage and I thank you for listening to an issue that the Dermatologists in your state care so passionately about.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay E. Watnick M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kay E. Watnick, M.D.